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CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL
PERFORMANCE AND INFORMATION

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DATE: November 2, 2006

TO: School district superintendents, public school academy administrators, secondary school principals

FROM: Margaret M. Ropp, Ph.D., director, Center for Educational Performance and Information
Jeremy Hughes, Ph.D., deputy superintendent/chief academic officer, Michigan Department of Education

SUBJECT: DRAFT Senior Cohort Report for the Class of 2007

In order to comply with *The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* and to meet the national standards set forth in the National Governors Association (NGA) "Graduation Counts Compact," the state of Michigan is moving to an accountability system for high schools in which a graduation rate includes only "on-time" graduates who earn diplomas. The NGA "four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate" must be calculated by tracking individual students from the time they were enrolled as first-time ninth-graders. This change from an estimated rate to a cohort rate that tracks graduates who are "on-time" may result in a lower graduation rate for high school buildings and districts because the estimated four-year graduation rate, in use since 1989, counted all diploma recipients as graduates, regardless of how many years they needed to earn diplomas.

Now that on-time graduation is a critical factor in determining the graduation rates for the **2006-2007 school year**, the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) is piloting a **draft** Senior Cohort Report that identifies the currently enrolled students who were first-time ninth-graders in the fall of 2003 in Michigan's public kindergarten-through-12th-grade (K-12) system, or those students new to Michigan's public K-12 system who have since entered the class of 2007 cohort.

Suggested Actions

To prepare your district for the impact of the cohort graduation rate, we have prepared a list of suggested actions and discussion items you might find helpful:

- **Distribute the attached document** with additional information and directions for obtaining the report to appropriate personnel members in your district.
- If necessary, **convene a working group** to review the draft report and validate the data in the report against records in your district's student management system. This group could determine which students may need additional support if they are not on track to graduate on time (four years from school year 2003-2004) with the rest of their cohort.
- **Develop a policy, support services and a public communication strategy** for the transition to a four-year adjusted cohort in conjunction with your district personnel or with your intermediate school district/regional educational service agency (ISD/RESA).

The state's ability to implement the NGA rate has been made possible by school districts' efforts to submit data about individual students through the Single Record Student Database/Unique Identification Code (SRSD/UIC) Application since the 2002-03 school year. We appreciate the effort and time that districts invest in providing quality data to CEPI that is used by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the U.S. Department of Education (ED), and hope that the data in these draft reports will enable you to make decisions that assist and support your students.

Enclosure

CC: Single Record Student Database (SRSD)/Unique Identification Code (UIC) resolvers
Graduation and Dropout (GAD) Application authorized users
Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) coordinators
PSA authorizers

Senior Cohort Report for the Class of 2007

Supplemental Information and Instructions

In order to comply with *The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* and to meet the national standards set forth in the National Governors Association (NGA) "Graduation Counts Compact," the state of Michigan is moving to an accountability system for high schools in which a graduation rate includes only "on-time" graduates who earn diplomas. The NGA "four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate" must be calculated by tracking individual students from the time they were enrolled as first-time ninth-graders. This change from an estimated rate to a cohort rate that tracks graduates who are "on-time" may result in a lower graduation rate for high school buildings and districts because the estimated four-year graduation rate, in use since 1989, counted all diploma recipients as graduates, regardless of how many years they needed to earn diplomas.

Now that on-time graduation is a critical factor in determining the graduation rates for the **2006-2007 school year**, the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) is piloting a draft Senior Cohort Report that identifies the currently enrolled students who were first-time ninth-graders in the fall of 2003 in Michigan's public kindergarten-through-12th-grade (K-12) system, or those students new to Michigan's public K-12 system who have since entered the class of 2007 cohort.

Recommended Actions:

1. **Single Record Student Database (SRSD)/Unique Identification Code (UIC) resolvers** should download copies of the draft report and work with district superintendents and high school principals to distribute to appropriate personnel members.
2. **Each high school principal** should work with his/her **guidance counselor** to review the progress of students identified in the draft report and determine which students may need additional support if they are not on track to graduate on time (four years from school year 2003-2004) with the rest of their cohort.
3. **SRSD/UIC Application resolvers** and **Graduation and Dropout Review and Comment Application (GAD) authorized users** should validate the information about the students provided on the draft report against their district's student information system to ensure that accurate data are being provided to the state. Although historical data cannot be corrected in SRSD, UIC resolvers can greatly improve the accuracy of the 2006-07 graduation rates by:
 - a. Providing accurate student data during the fall 2006, spring 2007, EOY 2007 and fall 2007 submissions
 - b. Completing Phase I and Phase II UIC Resolution on time and linking multiple student UICs as needed, particularly for high school students.
4. **School district personnel members who use the reports** should provide CEPI with feedback on these draft reports with regard to design, usefulness and any issues or concerns with the data queries and extractions that were used to produce the reports. Also, please provide suggestions for improvements or additional information that would be useful on potential future cohort reports using the following URL: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=41882685298>.

Report Access

Any SRSD/UIC Application authorized user with the UIC resolver role (view or edit) will have access to this report through the SRSD Application. We encourage you to contact your district's SRSD/UIC resolver to make arrangements for obtaining the Senior Cohort Report. A list of UIC resolvers, by district, can be obtained at the following Web address:

https://cepi.state.mi.us/SRSD/CEPI_Reports/SRSDResolver.asp.

Report Limitations

This draft report will be of value primarily in identifying those students who may comprise part of the class of 2007 cohort, and may be at risk of not graduating on time. This report cannot be used as an early indication of the graduation rate for the class of 2007 because it excludes several pieces of information including:

- Students identified as first-time ninth-graders in the fall of 2003 who are not accounted for in the End-of-Year 2006 SRSD Submission (e.g., dropouts);
- Students identified as first-time ninth-graders in the fall of 2003 who graduated prior to the 2006-2007 school year;
- An adjusted date of graduation for special education students identified as first-time ninth-graders in the fall of 2003, and whose Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) specify that the students are expected to graduate later than 2007; and
- Any other adjustments that may be permitted to allow students identified as first-time ninth-graders in the fall of 2003 to have more than the standard number of years to graduate.

Future Plans for Michigan's Graduation and Dropout Methodology

Since 1989, Michigan has used the same methodology to compute and report graduation and dropout rates. The Michigan Department of Education has used this graduation rate in the Michigan High School Report Cards as part of the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculation for high schools. This historical methodology has several limitations and flaws, chiefly because it uses only one year of data to calculate an “estimated four-year rate” instead of tracking individual students over time. In 2005, the NGA-recommended methodology (<http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0507grad.pdf>) was identified by Governor Granholm, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), and the Department of Management and Budget (DMB/CEPI) as the national standard that Michigan will implement when individual students have been tracked for enough years to compute the NGA rate. **CEPI and MDE plan to use the traditional estimation methodology to report the rates one last time for the class of 2006, and implement the NGA four-year adjusted cohort rate for the class of 2007.**

The state's ability to implement the NGA rate has been made possible by school districts' efforts to submit data about individual students through the SRSD/UIC Application since the 2002-03 school year. CEPI will use the SRSD data to identify students as they first enter ninth grade and will follow each cohort of students over four years for the purpose of calculating graduation rates based on individual student matriculation. We appreciate the effort and time that districts invest in providing quality data to CEPI and MDE, and hope that the data in these draft reports will enable you to make decisions that assist and support your students.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact CEPI at Help-Desk@michigan.gov or (517) 335-0505. If you would like to provide suggestions for improvements on potential future cohort reports, please use the following URL: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=41882685298>.